

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 01584

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TGEN, ENRG, US, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS: CONSERVATION

REF: (ASTATE 19602 (B) MOSCOW 937; (C) 77 MOSCOW 17976
(D) CIA WEEKLEY SUMMARY, CG WS 77-049

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN JCM DO NOT
RECALL NEPHOROZHNIY'S MENTION OF NEW CONSERVATION
MINISTRY. (HE DID MENTION IN HIS JCM OPENING
CREATION OF "NEW" MINISTRY OF THE POWER-MACHINE-
BUILDING INDUSTRY, CREATED IN 1975.) PLEASE CLARIFY.

2. DURING 27 JANUARY MEETING AT SCST,
SCICOUNS ASKED USA SECTION CHIEF AYKAZYAN TO
DESCRIBE CURRENT STATUS OF SOVIET EFFORTS IN
ENERGY CONSERVATION, AND EXPLAIN ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE COORDINATING THE PROGRAM. AYKAZYAN
RESPONDED THAT EACH OF THE "ENERGY-CONSUMING"
MINISTRIES HAS BEEN TASKED TO FORM A GROUP WITHIN THE
MINISTRY TO REVIEW CONSERVATION POLICIES AND TO
DEVELOP A CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE MINISTRY. THESE
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DEVELOPMENTS ARE "SO NEW," ACCORDING TO AYKAZYAN,
THAT COORDINATION OF INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES THROUGH
THESE GROUPS INTO A SINGLE NATIONAL PROGRAM HAS
NOT YET BEEN WORKED OUT, BUT GOSPLAN WILL LIKELY
PLAY THE PRE-DOMINANT ROLE. AYKAZYAN SAID THAT
SCST WILL ENTER THE PICTURE ONLY WHEN CONSERVATION
MEASURES CALL FOR INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

3. COMMENT: AYKAZYAN'S COMMENTS ARE CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS AND RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN COAL AND GAS MINISTRIES, I.E., WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE NO CLEAR SIGNS OF A MAJOR NATIONAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN OPERATION. MEDIA HAVE INCREASED THEIR EXHORTATIONS FOR CONSERVATION, AND MINISTRIES CONTINUE TO BE TARGETED FOR ENERGY SAVINGS PER UNIT OF PRODUCTION, BUT THOSE TECHNIQUES ARE NEITHER RADICAL NOR NEW. WE HAVE NOT OBSERVED IMPLEMENTATION OR ELICITED ANY DETAILS FROM SOVIETS ON REPORTED 7PCT DECREASE IN FUEL ALLOCATION TO INDUSTRY (REF D). MOREOVER, WE SEE NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT PRICE RISES ARE ON THE HORIZON. (SEE MINISTER ORUDZHEV'S COMMENTS TO SENATOR STEVENSON WHICH, WHILE ADMITTING THAT ENERGY PRICES ARE TOO CHEAP, EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR "PERSUASION" IN REDUCING CONSUMPTION. SEE REF B) THUS, EXCEPT FOR REDUCTION OF FUEL ALLOCATION TO INDUSTRY, OBSERVED SOVIET EFFORTS TO CONSERVE FUEL REMAIN WELL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK AND NORMAL GOALS FOR THIS COMMAND ECONOMY. WE WILL CONTINUE, HOWEVER, TO FOLLOW THESE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE BASIS OF BOTH THE PRESS AND OUR CONTACTS AT APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATIONS. QUESTION ABOUT GAS PRODUCTION (PARA 2 OF REF A) WILL BE TREATED SEPARATELY. MATLOCK
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